



**City of Bloomington
Office of the Common Council**

Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding Program

**Elaboration of the
Three Criteria for Evaluating and Awarding Grants
And
Other Policies**

Elaboration of Three Funding Criteria

In 1993 Jack Hopkins wrote a letter to the Committee outlining a set of criteria for the use of these social services funds. Aside from referring to a more recent community-wide survey, those criteria have served as the basis for allocating the funds ever since. The following is an elaboration of that policy approved by the Committee.

- 1. The program should address a previously identified priority for social services funds (as indicated in the SCAN - Service Community Assessment of Needs - or other community-wide survey of social service needs);**

“priority for social services funds”

The Common Council has used these funds for programs that provide food, housing, healthcare, childcare or youth services, or advocacy and specialized services to city residents who are, at least in part, of low and moderate income, affected with a disability, or elderly.

- 2. The funds should provide a one-time investment that, through matching funds or other fiscal leveraging, make a significant contribution to the program; and**

a. “one-time Investment”

This restriction is intended to encourage innovative projects and to allow the funds to address changing circumstances. For those reasons, it discourages agencies from relying on these funds from year to year and from using these funds to cover on-going costs, particularly those relating to personnel.

Operational Costs

Such costs are not generally considered a “one time investment,” but will be eligible for funding in two circumstances: first, when an agency is proposing a pilot project and demonstrates a well developed plan for funding in future years which is independent of this funding source; or second, when an agency demonstrates that an existing program has suffered a significant loss of funding and requires “bridge” funds in order to continue for the current year.

Renovation versus Maintenance

Costs associated with the renovation of a facility are an appropriate use of these funds, while the costs associated with the maintenance of a facility are considered part of the operational costs of the program and, when eligible, will be given low priority. When distinguishing between these two concepts the Committee will consider such factors as whether this use of funds will result in an expansion of services or whether the need was the result unforeseen circumstances.

Conferences and Travel

Costs associated with travel or attending a conference will generally be considered as an operating cost which, when eligible, will be given low priority.

Computer Equipment

Generally the costs associated with the purchase, installation, and maintenance of personal computers and related equipment will be considered an operational cost and, when eligible, be given low priority. However, the costs associated with system-wide improvements for information and communication technologies, or for specialized equipment may be considered a one-time investment.

b. “through matching funds or other fiscal leveraging, make a significant contribution to the program”

In the words of Jack Hopkins, who originally proposed these criteria, investments “should be leveraged wherever possible by matching from other sources.” Agencies may demonstrate such leveraging by using matching funds, working in partnership with other agencies, or other means.

Applications from City Agencies and Other Property Tax Based Entities

Over the years the Council has not funded applications submitted by city departments. This appears to be based on the theory that the departments have other, more appropriate avenues for requesting funds and should not compete against other agencies, which do not have the benefit city resources at their disposal. And, while never clearly stating they were ineligible, the Council has also not generally funded applications from agencies whose primary revenues derive from property taxes.

3. This investment in the program should lead to broad and long lasting benefits to the community.

“broad and long lasting benefits to the community”

Again, in the words of Jack Hopkins, “priority should be given to projects or programs where investments now will have a positive, long-term spillover effect (such as reduced susceptibility to ...diseases, decreased absences from school, reducing lost time (from work) .., etc).

Funding of Events and Celebrations Discouraged

Historically the Council has not funded applications for events or celebrations. It appears that this is based upon the conclusion that these occasions do not engender the broad and long-lasting effects required by this third criterion.

Explanation of Other Policies

One application per agency

Each agency is limited to one application. This policy is intended to: 1) spread these funds among more agencies; 2) assure the suitability and quality of applications by having the agency focus and gamble on one application at a time; and 3) lower the administrative burden by reducing the number of applications of marginal value. Given the benefits flowing from cooperative efforts among agencies, applications that are the product of the efforts of more than one agency will be attributed only to the agency that signs and presents it to the Committee.

\$1,000 Minimum Dollar Amount for Request

This is a competitive funding program involving many hours on the part of staff and the committee members deliberating upon and monitoring proposals. The \$1,000 minimum amount was chosen as a good balance between the work expended and the benefits gained from awarding these small grants.

Funding Agreement – Reimbursement of Funds – Expenditure Before End-of-the-Year

The Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) Department has been monitoring the funding agreements since 2001. In order to be consistent with the practices it employs in monitoring CDBG and other funding programs, the funding agreements provide for a reimbursement of funds. Rather than receiving the funds before performing the work, agencies either perform the work and seek reimbursement, or enter into the obligation and submit a request for the city to pay for it. And, in order to avoid having the City unnecessarily encumber funds, agencies should plan to expend and verify these grants before December of the year the grants were awarded, unless specifically approved in the funding agreement. Please note that funds encumbered from one calendar year to the next cannot be reimbursed by use of the City’s credit cards.